

DNR @ WORK

Karen Jarboe

Team Leader, Maryland Conservation Corps

What exactly is the MCC?

The Maryland Conservation Corps (MCC) is an Americorps program for men and women ages 18-25. In its partnership with DNR, the MCC provides an important labor force the agency would not otherwise be able to accomplish. There are currently seven MCC crews located at Tuckahoe, Patapsco Valley, Greenwell, Swallow Falls, Assateague, Susquehanna State Parks, and Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary, where I am stationed.

The crews do a plethora of work including trail work/maintenance, stream surveys, shoreline restoration, interpretive/educational programming, Scales and Tales, updating/creating displays, wildlife surveys, prescribed burns, invasive species removal (including the emerald ash borer), canoe and kayak trips, and plenty of other projects.

Another goal of MCC is to provide young men and women with challenging and rewarding experiences. Trainings are also provided, such as wildland fire fighting, first responder, search and rescue, boater safety, Leave No Trace, etc. All members receive a living stipend, an educational award upon completion, health insurance, and loan forbearance.

What is your role with MCC?

As a second year team leader at Merkle Wildlife sanctuary I was given the special task of resurrecting a volunteer base; Merkle's friends group recently dissolved for a number of reasons and the sanctuary has been suffering since its loss. My goal for this year is to create a sufficient volunteer base to provide the visitor center with staffing when the MCC crew is busy with conservation projects.

What are some of the projects you have worked on?

This is always a tough question to answer because we have done so many projects in the two years I've been here. The most memorable project for me was helping forestry eradicate the emerald ash borer, which consisted of pilling and flagging ash that the skidder might have forgotten or

overlooked. Lots of saw work and running around in the woods! This year I participated in a shoreline restoration project at Smallwood State Park, where we created wave barriers out of natural material including rocks collected from the creek and logs found near the site.

What is the most important point you would try to relate to the general public about preserving our state's resources?

I think that people often forget how dependent they are on the land, water, and animals that live here... Technology, something we are dependent on day in and day out, seems so distant from nature and the "natural world" that it is easy to forget that everything is derived from some part of the earth, or that it effects and impacts the earth. We are so caught up in our culture and in our habitual every day lives that we don't often take time to reconnect and experience nature for itself, unmediated. If we can find this connection and remember that everything we do is connected to the environment and all the living beings around us (including humans), then that's when preservation truly begins.

What is your background?

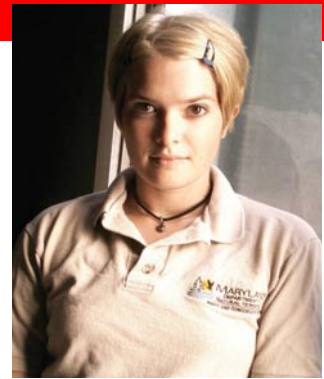
What do you do in your spare time?

My background is actually in philosophy. I went to St. Mary's College of Maryland and graduated with my B.A. in 2006. Philosophy truly is my passion. People often think it's strange that a philosophy major has decided to do environmental work; however, I feel it's closely related. Everything we do has a philosophy behind it. I'm just putting it in action this time. After I finish this year with MCC I will be going for my PhD in Philosophy.

I am also a guitarist. I've been playing for 12 years and I've taught guitar for 7.

Any last thoughts, ideas or comments you'd like to include?

Being an MCC team leader has been an awesome experience and will continue to be I'm sure. I am way more confident in my leading abilities than



ever before and I'm way more confident in my physical abilities than I ever thought as well. I would have never have thought I'd be using a chain saw, plowing a field, building a trail, etc. These are opportunities that are once in a lifetime for me and I'm living it up.

Another thing that I'd like to add is that I think this is an excellent program for women to explore their capabilities. Women often don't have the opportunity to do physical labor and to use heavy dangerous machinery. This a safe place for women to experiment and learn about these tools and expand their abilities. I strongly suggest it!

The Civilian Conservation Corps in Maryland

Established in 1933 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was a work relief program for young men from unemployed families. The young men who enlisted in the CCC



were paid to do outdoor construction work. The enrollees improved millions of acres of federal and state lands, and parks. New roads were built, telephone lines strung and CCC enrollees throughout the country were credited with renewing the nation's decimated forests by planting an estimated three billion trees from 1933 to 1942. The CCC also made outstanding contributions in the development of recreational facilities in national, state, county and metropolitan parks. These included protecting the natural habitats of wildlife, stream improvement, restocking of fish, trail construction and building small dams for water conservation.



Winter at Tolliver Falls
Swallow Falls State Park
Bev Greaser

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ISSN 1521-9984



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